Hamilton Field, Bachelor Officers' Quarters
(Facility No. 201)
201 Sunset Drive
Novato
Marin County
California

HABS No. CA-2398-BD

HABS CAL 21-NOVA, 1BD-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS CAL RI-NOVA, IBD-

HAMILTON FIELD Bachelor Officers' Quarters (Facility No. 201)

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Location:

Hamilton Army Air Field

Novato, Marin County, California

Bachelor Officers' Quarters

Facility No. 201 (201 Sunset Drive)

U.S.G.S.: Novato, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1954 (revised 1980) Petaluma Point, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1959 (revised 1980) UTM Coordinates: Zone 10; A: 542100/4213620; B: 544720/4212220;

C: 542760/4210650; D: 541040/4212600

Present Owner: U. S. Navy, Washington, D.C.

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Vacant

Statement of Significance:

The Bachelor Officers' Quarters are among the original residential units designed by the Constructing Quartermaster's Office at Hamilton Army Air Field. The quarters were equipped with all the modern amenities available at the time they were built and were architecturally unique in the military system. The building is significant as an example of the application of an important architectural trend (Spanish Colonial Revival) adapted to reflect California's mission heritage in a dramatic departure from traditional military architecture.

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) for a comprehensive Statement of Significance and individual report HABS No. CA-2398-F for a condensed general Statement of Significance.

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PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

- 1. Date of Erection: Construction of the Bachelors' Officers Quarters was completed on November 16, 1934 (Hamilton Facility Cards 1933-1971).
- 2. Architect: Hamilton Field was designed under the guidance of Captain Howard B. Nurse, Construction Quartermaster. He was assisted by a corps of civilians headed by H. P. Spencer, Chief Architect, and F. W. Salfinger, Chief Engineer. Captain F. C. Peters and Lieutenant J. H. Veal of the Quartermaster's Corps were detailed to Marin County by the War Department to assist Nurse (*Novato Advance May 28*, 1932). Landscaping efforts were directed by C. C. Stevens, a local landscape engineer, using plantings chosen by Nurse and donated by Marin County citizens.
- 3. Original Owner: Hamilton Field is on land originally owned by private individuals and companies. In 1930, the California Packing Company sold 630 acres of land to Marin County to use to entice the Army to build on the site. An additional 161 acres were purchased from Dr. T. Peter and Julia 8odkin. These parcels were combined with other County-owned land, and in 1932 Marin County sold a 927-acre parcel of land to the Department of the Army for \$1.00 for use by the Army Air Corps as an air field. In 1947 Hamilton Air Field was transferred to the newly-formed U. S. Air Force and renamed Hamilton Air Force Base. In 1974 the U. S. Congress declared the installation excess to military needs and closed the base (Maniery et al. 1993). The BOQ was transferred to the U. S. Navy in 1974 and remains in Navy ownership in 1995.
- 4. Builder, Contractor, Supplier: The BOQ was built by M. Spivock for a total cost of \$83,389.68. Spivock was awarded the contract on January 18, 1933, for an estimated cost of \$86,100.
- 5. Original Plans and Construction: Original plans for all permanent housing and the BOQ were drawn on linen with black ink by Nurse's corps of architects. The originals have not been located, but copies of these plans for the BOQ (elevations, electrical, plumbing, floor plans) are filed at the National Archives, Pacific Division, in San Bruno, California, and can be accessed through the U. S. Navy. Facility cards for the permanent housing, including an original photograph taken at completion of construction and floor plans, and other historical photographs depicting the BOQ are on file at the Hamilton Room, Novato History Museum, in Novato, California. Early views of the area under construction and at completion of work are contained in the Walt Lyons scrapbook at the Marin County Library, History Room, San Rafael, California.

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6. Alterations/Additions: The BOQ has had minimal modification. Basement layout has been altered by the addition of a small wina storage area in the southeast corner of the basement and ramoval of interior walls between the cook's room and help's room in the basemant and the latrine facilities. While toilets and sinks are gone, the original tile floor, marble threshold, and floor drains remain. The first floor dining room has been partitioned into three small rooms and kitchen counters and equipment removed. A latrine has been added to the now-partitioned kitchen. No changes to layout have been made to the actual officers' quarters. Some original lighting fixtures have been replaced as well.

B. Historical Context:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The parmanent housing area at Hamilton Field, including the BOQ, was planned around the existing topography to complement the architectural style chosen for the base. Nurse and his team of architects dasigned rainforced concrete buildings covered with white stucco and red tile roofs and other features such as arcades and ornamental door surrounds in a basic Spanish Colonial Revival styla. This style was used by Captain Nurse at Randolph Field in Texas and by other Army architects at various bases (Fine and Remington 1972:4B; Thomason and Associates 1993). Captain Nurse blended the standard Colonial Revival design with elements borrowed from Moorish, Spanish Churriguerresque, Mission, and Art Moderne styles, creating a unique Spanish Eclectic look.

The BOQ is of reinforced concrete construction and has Mission tile roofs and reinforced concrete foundations. Steel bars were used during construction in consideration of the seismic activity of the region. The BOQ is divided into 17 apartments with a central kitchen, cook quarters, and mess hall. Additional space was used for up to six visiting officers.

2. Condition of fabric: The BOQ has been vacant for several years and is deteriorating. Vandals have broken glass mirrors and glass shower doors, covered some walls with graffiti, and lit fires in toilets. Rooms are strewn with litter and debris. Some structural damage was sustained as a result of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. The exterior fabric is in good condition, except for graffiti and peeling paint.

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B. Description of Exterior:

- 1. Overall dimensions: The Bachelor's Officers Quarters has a rectilinear mass with projecting wings on the north and south. The front elevation features a projecting cantilevered cast concrete balcony, an ornate recessed porch, projecting metal balconies on the second floor, and arched automobile bays on the basement level. The overall dimensions of the building are 139 feet by 60 feet. The building is two stories tall and has a partially below grade basement and ground level garage.
- 2. Foundation: The foundation is reinforced concrete and measures two feet wide at the base.
- 3. Walls: The walls are constructed of poured-in-place reinforced concrete coated with cementitious stucco rendered with a smooth face. Exterior detailing on the main building mass consists of two projecting band courses at the cornice level. A bullnose band course divides the basement and first floors of the wings. A cross-gable on the north front wing features a pendentive bracketed cornice and a central gable vent with an eight-pointed star. The east wing features a Moorish roofline with cement steeple caps at each corner. Arched window openings on the second floor feature semi-circular cantilevered balconies. A cantilevered cast stone balcony supported by massive cast concrete decorative brackets is located on the front facade at the first floor laval. Tha basement leval features six arched and bracketed automobile bays, now boarded closed, and a Moorish-style porch with decorative tile wainscoting on the axterior and interior walls. An archad colonnade is located on the south alevation. The windows feature projecting reinforced cast concrete sills. Second story windows on the north and south elevations are slightly arched with peaks.
- 4. Structural systems, framing: Structural support is provided by reinforced concrete columns and a wooden girder system. Reinforced concrete tie beams circle the building at each floor level. The roof system consists of terra cotta Mission tile laid on a wood truss system.
- 5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The primary entrance is accessed through a columned recessed porch with a Moorish arch and a terra cotta Mission tile shed roof. Decorative ceramic tile wainscoting is located on the exterior and interior walls of the porch. A cantilevered cast "stone" (concrete) balcony, supported by concrete corbels, features a stucco-covered concrete balustrade pierced by lozenge-shaped recessed openings and six-pointed stars. Balconies on the first and second floors have cantilevered cast concrete platforms and decorative wrought iron railings. These include three semi-circular balconies on the front and rear second floor elevations, and a rectangular one on the north wing. Another balcony with a metal platform and wrought iron railings supported by decorative wrought iron brackets wraps around the northwest corner of the first floor. An arcaded walkway, with five arches supported by

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six circular columns, is located along the south wall. It has a terra cotta Mission tile shed roof. A concrete stoop and stairway provide access to the first floor north elevation, and a small concrete stoop with terra cotta tile shed roof supported by decorative wood brackets provides access to the east rear of the building. Both have two-inch pipe metal railings.

6. Chimneys: Building 201 has two stucco-clad brick chimneys; one is located on the exterior of the north elevation and another on the exterior east elevation of the southeast wing. Both are rectangular in shape and have elaborated chimney tops with two rows of arched terra cotta decorations in a diamond pattern. Cast iron cleanout doors and frames are located at the base of each chimney.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways/doors: Primary entrance doors are glass and panel and are located within the recessed front porch. First and second floor balconies are accessed by double metal French doors with twelve lights; each set has a fan window overhead. A solid core wood door, with four lights over a recessed panel, provide access to the first floor from the stairways on the north wing, while another solid core wood door with two recessed panels accesses the south wing.
- b. Windows/shutters: Windows are metal industrial casement type with three lights in each window. A fixed transom, with two lights each, is located above each casement window. Several of the casement windows have fanlights. Windows in the bathrooms are of metal casement type, with three lights each of frosted security glass.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape/covering: The BOQ has a cross-gable roof with front-gable roof on the north wing and a hip roof on the south wing. The roof is covered with terra cotta Mission tile and has a Mission tile ridge line.
- b. Cornice/eaves: A projecting stucco band course is located beneath the eaves at the cornice level. The gabled facade of the north wing has a pendentive bracketed cornice. A decorative stucco course is located at the roofline of the south wing. The gutter system consists of copper tin troughs, downspouts, and decorative scuppers. A cast concrete splash block is located under each downspout.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The four corners of the south wing are capped with concrete towers and finials.

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C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor Plans:
 - a. Basement: As originally designed, the basement floor contained garage space in the central mass and the north wing. The south wing was divided into several rooms, including the tiled entrance foyer which provided access to the first floor via a staircase. Other rooms included bedrooms for the cook and help, as well as two trunk rooms and a boiler room.
 - b. First Floor: The primary access to the first floor is via a stairway from the basement level porch; secondary accesses are located on each side elevation and on the rear wall. The central mass of the first floor contains a double loaded corridor with three two-room apartments on either side. Each apartment consists of a living room, bedroom, bathroom, and closet. Another two-room apartment, slightly larger in size than the others, is located on the northwest corner of the north wing. A dormitory is located on its northeast corner. As originally designed, the south wing contained the stairway and hall, as well as a dining room and kitchen which have been converted to a separate apartment. A bathroom and telephone room are located on the east rear of the hallway.
 - c. Second Floor: The floor plan of the central mass of the second floor is the same as the first, with three two-room apartments on each side of a central corridor. The north wing consists of two, two-room apartments. A large apartment, consisting of two living rooms, a study, two baths, and a bedroom, is located in the south wing.
 - d. Attic: The attic consists of a large open space with a concrete floor. The exposed truss rafters sit atop the concrete piers and support the central beams. Sheathing over the rafters is one- by seven-inch Douglas fir. A series of screened copper vents provide light and ventilation. Access to the attic is provided by a fire ladder in the second floor janitorial closet.
- 2. Stairways: The Bachelor Officer's Quarters are served by six sets of stairs; the primary stairway is located in the south wing and provides access from the ground level to the first and second floors. An exterior stairway on the north wing accesses the first floor corridor, while the exterior stairway on the south wing accesses an interior stairway between the basement and first floor levels between the kitchen and dining room. Another stairway provides access to the basement from the outside rear wall. The exterior stairways are constructed of concrete. A narrow stairway, at the north end of the building, connects the first and second floor corridors. It is constructed of concrete, and has a two-inch metal balustrade affixed to the wall. The primary stairway is the focal point of the building's interior and accesses the basement level foyer and large hallways on the first and second floors. The stairs are concrete, with 12-inch red quarry tile treads and decorative ceramic tile risers. There is a decorative wrought iron banister and balustrade on the exterior of the stairway.

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- 3. Flooring: The basement flooring is smooth finish concrete. Flooring in the foyer and main hallways is 12-inch red quarry tile. Other rooms on the first and second floors have red oak flooring. Floors in the bathrooms are one- and one-by-two inch brown and beige ceramic tile. Modern carpeting has been placed in some rooms.
- 4. Wall/ceiling finish: The hallways, corridors, stairwells, dining areas, dormitory, and apartments are painted plaster. The primary color is white or off-white. The bathroom walls are covered with four-inch square white ceramic tile with a black tile bullnose trim and baseboard. The bathroom ceilings and upper portions of the walls are painted plaster.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways/doors: Archways provide access to the corridors from the main hallways on the first and second floors. Arched doorways, with multi-panel solid core oak doors, are located on the east rear wall of the first floor hallwey end provide access to a bathroom, an exterior entrance, and a telephone closet. Each apartment is accessed by a single solid-core wood door with two or three recessed panels and a transom. The entry hall of the third floor apartment has arches into the adjoining rooms. Bathrooms have marble thresholds.
- 6. Decorative features/trim: Decorative trim in the first floor hallway consists of cast-concrete *vigas* on the ceiling, a series of corbeled arches along the rear wall which provide support to the stairway, and decorative corniced pilasters on the archways between the hallways and corridors. The hallways and primary rooms have crown moldings. Simple wood moldings, baseboards, and window lintels comprise decorative trim. Fireplaces are present in the living room on the first and second floor northwest corner apartments, as well as in the living rooms of the second floor south apartment. Some fireplaces are built at an angle and are three-sided. Others have a decorative cast concrete shell design in the center below the mantle. All are constructed of "cast stone" (concrete) and feature decorative pilasters, faux stone work, mantels, quarry tile hearths, and firebrick interiors.
- 7. Hardware: The door hardware consists of a standard circular knob and lock set with half mortise door hinge.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Steam radiators are located in each room end provide heating. Radiators are made by the American Radiator Company. Steam is generated by a cast iron boiler located in the basement. The boiler room contains a Weil-McLain Company boiler fueled with natural gas. This boiler, made in Michigan City, Indiana, wes installed in the 1960s. A free-standing gas water heater, made by Gaffers & Sattler Mission Company, is present in the boiler room.

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- b. Kitchen Appliances: No original kitchen appliances were noted; all are replacements.
- c. Ventilation: Ventilation for the building is through copper-screened vents located in the cornice band.
- Lighting: Originally an eight-circuit electrical panel with screw-in glass fuses, made by Bulldog Electric Products Company, Detroit, was located in the boiler room. A 200-amp circuit breaker box, made by Meyers Safety Switch Company of San Francisco and installed by Chas. A. Langlois Company, replaced the original system. A decorative cast concrete light bracket, set on the diagonal, is located outside the main entrance foyer. A canopy and suspended hammered metal fixture, is present in the foyer and second floor hallway. A wall-mounted, foursided square cast metal light fixture with a porcelain socket and a petal design around the rim is located on the exterior of the building near the main foyer entrance. A fluted glass and brass circular canopy, suspended by a one-inch chain from the ceiling, is present in the first floor dining room. This fixture has a porcelain socket in a five-point star, designed to hold five bulbs. Three original metal fixtures are present in the south facade exterior arcade. These are drop lights with scalloped edges on the hood and base, designed like oil lamps. All other fixtures were modern replacements except for pull-chain ceramic receptacles above the bathroom sinks.
- e. Plumbing: Each bathroom contained a "Standard" flush valve toilet, "Kohler" wall-mounted sink, and tub with porcelain and metal fixtures or a shower stall. Original bathroom furnishings include ceramic toothbrush and cup holders, soap dishes, toilet paper holders, and plastic-covered wood towel rods, as well as mirrored metal medicine cabinets. The dormitory bath contains two sinks, two toilets with marble stall dividers, and one shower. The janitorial closets on each floor contain ceramic sinks.
- 9. Original Furnishings: Original furnishings include built-in closets in each of the apartments with drawers and shelves. Those in the smaller apartments have two shelves behind panelled doors, four small drawers with brass handles, and five drawers with cut-out hand pulls. The closets include two shelves, a clothes rod, and coat hooks. The main apartments had larger walk-in closets, but with the same built-in units.

D. Site:

1. General site orientation: The primary facade of the Bachelor's Officers Quarters faces west. Located in the original Spanish Colonial Revival district of Hamilton Army Air Field on a hillside, the building is surrounded by rolling lawns and situated northwest and downslope from the Officer's Club.

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2. Historic landscape design: Captain Nurse's overall plan for base design included thoughtful use of rock walls, terracing, and plantings to create a visual effect that was continued, in a more limited fashion, during World War II. Rock terracing throughout the original base served to simultaneously separate individual residences while visually uniting various sections of the base into an overall city-like plan. They were built as part of the final phase of original post construction in 1935 (Hamilton Official Photographs 1934-1935). Foundation and accent plantings, tree-lined streets, and retention of natural oak groves and rolling hills complement the rock work.

Building 201 is surrounded by rolling lawns, conifers, oaks, and foundation shrubbery consisting of cottoneaster, nandina, pittosporum, and other exotic plantings. The primary facade is approached via a driveway from Sunset Drive to a parking lot adjacent to the front facade. A concrete walkway behind the building connects it with the Officer's Club on the hillside above. Stone retaining walls are located on the south side of the BOQ.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

B. Historic Maps and Views:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

C. Interviews:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

D. Bibliography:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

Sources cited in this individual report are listed below.

Fine, Jesse, and Lenore Remington

1972 Army Corps of Engineers: Construction in the U.S. U.S. Army and World War II, Office of Military History.

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Hamilton Facility Cards

1933-1971 Maintenance Cards for Base Facilities. On file, Hamilton Army Air Field Installation Office, Novato, and Hamilton Room, Novato History Museum, Novato.

Maniery, Mary L., Leslie R. Fryman, and Fred Hrusa

1993 National Register of Historic Places Evaluation, Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District, Marin County, California. Submitted to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District.

Thomason and Associates

1993 Randolph Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. Cultural Resource Survey, Final Report. Nashville, Tennessee. On file, State Office of Historic Preservation, Austin, Texas.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

F. Supplemental Material:

See also the project Field Record, roll 85, exposures 1-12.

Copies of representative floor plans of Facility No. 201, dated in the 1930s and prepared by the Quartermaster's General Office are attached to this form.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Hamilton Army Air Field is owned by various federal entities including the Department of the Navy, Department of the Army, United States Coast Guard, and General Services Administration. The Army/GSA parcels are being excessed and sold to private developers. The Navy property is included in Base Closure and Realignment actions.

As part of the Army's undertaking, it has been determined in consultation with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) that the excess sale will have an affect on properties at the air field, and that these properties are components of a district that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Based on consultation with the OHP and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 CFR part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was entered into by the interested parties in March 1994. The agreement stipulated that prior to excess sale the Army must contact the HABS/HAER division at the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, San Francisco, California,

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to determine the appropriate level and kind of recordation for the subject properties. The MOA further stipulated that copies of the documentation be made available to the OHP and appropriate local archives designated by the OHP. This recordation has been prepared in order to meet those stipulations.

The title page, Part I, and Part III were prepared by Mary L. Maniery, Historian, PAR Environmental Services, Sacramento. Architectural descriptions in Part II were compiled by Judith Marvin, Historian/Architectural Historian, Foothill Resources, Murphys, California. Descriptions were checked against photographs and plans by Mary L. Maniery and were embellished and corrected, as necessary. Information on historic landscape design was extracted by Mary L. Maniery from a report prepared by Dr. Fred Hrusa, Botanist, PAR Environmental Services (Hrusa 1993). Photography was prepared by David DeVries, Mesa Technical, Berkeley, California.











